



Fee Proposal Facts

PROBLEM ONE: Revenue from sportsmen licenses fees are not keeping up with fish and wildlife program demands and pressing public expectations. The Commission and sportsmen advocate that their license dollars should be directed at hunting and fishing activities.

- Idaho has an amazing 70 hunted species including 10 big game species.
- IDFG presently is a **user fee based agency** funded primarily by participating anglers and hunters. Fish and Game receives **NO GENERAL FUND (TAX)** money. Idaho resident license buyers provide 21 percent of our license revenue while nonresident license buyers provide 25 percent. Federal funds and mitigation programs provide the remainder of Fish and Game's revenue.
- A decade of tight budgets has made it difficult for IDFG to meet sportsmen expectations as stated by our vision statement : *"providing abundant, diverse fish and wildlife and ensuring a rich outdoor heritage for all generations."*
- IDFG has stretched the 10 percent fee increase received in 2005 to four years instead of the agreed upon two years.
- IDFG is a fiscally responsible agency. A Legislative Services Office review of FY 2006-2009 shows the IDFG budget increased by two percent, while the state's other natural resource agency budgets increased an average of 16.7 percent. All other state agency's budgets increased by 25.9 percent.
- IDFG has made efficiency gains in having a 4000 member volunteer corps; new energy-efficient regional offices, new bar code scanning web-based license system; a vehicle fleet management program that has reduced almost 100 vehicles and improved average mileage from 13.5 in 2002 to 16mpg in 2007; \$400,000 savings in annual State Central Services Charges, videoconferencing, on-line hunter education, electronic bill paying, P-Cards, on-line harvest reporting, on-line hunter and angler surveys, re-aligned the Director's office and eliminated a bureau.
- Hunters and anglers are an economic force in Idaho supporting 11,500 jobs, spending \$598 million, and generating \$70 million in state and local tax revenue. Sportsmen pay \$34.3 million in license fees and \$8.1 million in excise taxes on their gear.

PROBLEM TWO: The principle of *"Those that benefit pay, those that pay benefit"* is not happening in Idaho. Many Idahoans benefit from hunter and angler license funded programs but do pay to support those programs. Most Idahoans appreciate wildlife and would like a mechanism to support wildlife.

- Ninety percent of Idaho species are not hunted or fished, yet IDFG is legislatively mandated to manage these species.
- Idahoans believe **"All beneficiaries should pay, all payees should benefit."** - a recommendation from *The 1994 Performance Study of the IDFG* and strongly supported by public opinion surveys.
- Ninety-one percent of Idaho citizen's value wildlife, 75 percent participate in wildlife activities, while less than 25 percent of our citizens support wildlife through hunting and fishing licenses.

- Tight hunter- and angler-supported budgets have made it difficult for IDFG to meet state and public expectations for all wildlife as presented in IDFG's Vision... ensuring a rich outdoor heritage for all generations.
- The public expects IDFG to promote responsible land use planning, OHV use, public wildlife education and technical services, urban wildlife conflicts, crop depredations complaints, and management of 90 percent of Idaho non-hunted species.
- Expected services from IDFG go well beyond core hunting and fishing services. Statute and public expectations include management of all wildlife species and native plants, responsible off road vehicle use, species-at-risk conservation, general wildlife information and education, urban wildlife conflicts, broader public access to wildlife and nature centers, and technical assistance. Technical assistance for land and water use planning measures are endorsed by the Western Governors' Association policy resolutions on invasive species control, sagebrush conservation, watershed restoration, and protecting open spaces.
- A little over one percent of the IDFG budget comes from the general public (license plates and state non-game income tax check-off) while other states average considerably more funding from the general public.
- Thirty-one states have broadened their funding beyond traditional fishing and hunting licenses to support their broader wildlife needs and demands.
- It's estimated that the non-license buying public account for half the recreational use of IDFG's 34 Wildlife Management Areas and 325 fishing and boating access areas.

The 2001 Congress-adopted State Wildlife Grant program provides federal funds to prevent at-risk species from being listed. However, IDFG is often challenged to find the necessary required match in order to implement this program.

Idaho conservation strategy identifies 229 species of greatest conservation need and 15 priority habitats. New state public funding is needed to ensure Idaho has the necessary baseline information to have a strong voice in shaping federal mandates.

The Wildlife Policy for Idaho and Mission statement for IDFG is: ***"All wildlife... shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed...and provide for the citizens...continued supplies of such wildlife..."*** is being severely stretched (Idaho Code Section 36-103). There has been a dramatic shift in mission elements from managing the **"provide"** to managing the first 3 "Ps"... **"preserving, protecting, perpetuating"** especially in the threatened and endangered species arena to ensure Idaho has a strong voice in shaping federal mandates.

The Compass: Idaho Fish and Game Strategic Plan, **Direction 2008:** Issues, Accomplishments, & Priorities, **Business Plan, Web page,** and species plans provide strategic direction and additional information where the department is and going.

From the USFWS 2006 Survey, wildlife associated expenses in Idaho totaled \$922 million. Fishing and hunting contributed \$656.6 million and wildlife watching contributed \$265.4 million. Further, over 432,000 people participated in wildlife watching activities.

Vision

Guided by a citizen commission, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game shall work with Idaho residents in providing abundant, diverse fish and wildlife and ensuring a rich outdoor heritage for all generations.